United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1088
27 February 1992

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Rolf Ekeus, head of special mission to Iraq seeking guarantees for complete disclosure of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, says he did not reach "unconditional agreement" with Iraqi Government.

- Spokeswoman informs correspondents that formal appointment of Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar as Force Commander of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia will be announced shortly, together with that of other senior personnel.

- Board of Governors of International Atomic Energy Agency agrees to strengthen nuclear safeguards inspection regime.

- Report by United Nations Environment Programme reveals new, important results from research on effects of ozone depletion

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The Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, Rolf Ekeus, says he has not been able to receive guarantees from the Iraqi Government that it will provide "full, final and complete disclosure" of all its weapons of mass destruction. He was head of a special mission dispatched by the Security Council to Iraq from 21 to 24 February to seek an unconditional agreement by Iraq to implement all its obligations under resolution 786 (1991).

In his report to the Secretary-General yesterday, Mr. Ekeus says that despite a statement by the Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein reaffirming Iraq's willingness to cooperate and deal constructively with all the inspection missions, Iraq is not providing full and complete disclosure of its weapons programmes. Instead, Iraq has expressed the view that it has already provided all the necessary information required of it. However, Mr. Ekeus notes, while the discussions between the Special mission and the Iraqi representatives were in progress, a ballistic missile inspection team found, at two sites, prohibited items that had not previously been declared.

(more)

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The Commission Chairman concludes that much remains to be done, particularly in the chemical, biological and ballistic missile fields. Only the full cooperation and goodwill of the Government of Iraq will lead to successful ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraqi weapons sites and to the assumption that "Iraq was in substantial compliance with its obligations" under the Security Council's resolutions, he says. (S/23643)

In separate news today, it was announced that the Security Council would convene a formal meeting tomorrow morning, with the possibility of adopting a draft text on the Secretary-General's report on Cambodia.

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A United Nations spokeswoman told correspondents today that the formal appointment of Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar of India as Force Commander of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) would be announced in the coming days, together with that of other senior personnel of the Force.

Mr. Nambiar has had wide-ranging experience involving regimental, command and staff appointments. Among other things, he has served as Military Adviser with the Indian High Commission in the United Kingdom and was appointed as Additional Director General Military Operations to the rank of Major General in June 1989.

On the financial implications of UNPROFOR, the Spokeswoman said the documents indicating the full cost for the operation would be ready this weekend and would be taken up by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

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A number of measures intended to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system have been agreed to by the Agency's Board of Governors. During a two-day meeting, which ended yesterday in Vienna, the Board agreed on enhancing IAEA's ability to conduct special inspections and to expand requirements on the provision and use of design information about nuclear facilities.

The Board called on parties to comprehensive safeguards agreements to provide preliminary information on programmes for new nuclear facilities and modifications to existing facilities, as soon as the decision to construct, to authorize construction or to modify a facility has been taken. That information, it said, would be updated during the project definition, preliminary design, construction and commissioning phases.

The Board also discussed the preparation of an international convention in the field of nuclear safety.

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Press Release DH/1088
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Several new and important results have emerged from research over the past few years on the effects of ozone depletion, according to a report issued this month by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It concludes, among other points, that increased penetration of solar ultraviolet radiation to the earth's surface - due to continuing loss of stratospheric ozone - is likely to result in a higher incidence of skin cancer, eye problems and infectious diseases, as well as food shortages and the extinction of some plant and animal species.

The report, entitled "Environmental Effects of Ozone Depletion: 1991 Update", evaluates progress made during the past two years in research on the effects of increased B-band untraviolet (UVB) radiation. Issued by UNEP's Environmental Effects Panel, it is intended to assist decision-makers by incorporating scientific information on the effects of ozone depletion into the policy process.

According to the report, increases in UVB radiation tallied with observed decreases in ozone (such as the "ozone hole" over Antartica) in a way consistent with theoretical predictions. On the other hand, decreases in ultraviolet radiation observed in industrialized areas were due possibly to rising pollution levels. Efforts to cut pollution and climate changes that might reduce cloudiness could increase penetration by UVB radiation in those areas.

Another point concerns the controversial issue of chlorofluorocarbons - or CFCs. Even with an immediate phase-out of CFCs and related compounds, the report states, current chlorine levels in the atmosphere commit the world to an inevitable decrease in stratospheric ozone well into the next century.

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